

One of the required features of claim 1 is a privacy agent. The privacy agent performs the important function of programmatically maintaining transactional anonymity between the verified users on the web servers. This is accomplished "by interfering temporarily with transmission of a message containing information regarding an actual identity of the verified user sending the message until that user either removes the information or authorizes its transmission as part of the message." (Claim 1; *See also* page 10, line 8 - page 11, line 22; page 13, lines 4-7; and page 15, lines 19-24.) The privacy agent feature of the present invention is important to the system because it prevents inadvertent disclosure of identifying information to other verified users. (*See* page 2, lines 20-21; page 8, lines 17-18; page 11, lines 18-20.)

None of the cited references suggest a system having a privacy agent as recited in claim 1. The office action acknowledges that neither the Walker patent nor the Calamera patent suggest this feature. (*See* page 3, lines 15-17.) In addition, the Axaopoulos patent contains no teaching or suggestion of a privacy agent containing the features recited in claim 1. The office action indicates that the Axaopoulos patent discloses "a user that can purchase products at an other web site using a navigation agent's identity, a unique identity corresponding to that user in the market place program, or a temporary identity for the user without the supplier knowing the identity of the user (see., abstract, col 17, lines 4-15)." (Office action page 3, lines 15-17.) Nevertheless, the Axaopoulos patent does not suggest a privacy agent that interferes temporarily with transmission of a message containing information regarding an actual identity of the verified user sending the message until that user either removes the information or authorizes its transmission as part of the message. Since this required feature of claim 1 is not suggested by any of the cited references, independent claim 1 is allowable.

Similarly, independent claims 8 and 12 include a privacy agent in which transmission is temporarily inhibited until the sender either removes information identifying the sender, or authorizes the disclosure of that information. As described above, this required feature of the claims is not disclosed in any of the cited references. Therefore, claims 8 and 12 are allowable.

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Furthermore, claims 2-7, 9-11, and 13-20 all depend from one of allowable independent claims 1, 8, or 12, and are also allowable.

In view of the foregoing, this application containing pending claims 1-20 is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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